PEACE/WILLISTON
FISH & WILDLIFE
COMPENSATION
PROGRAM

BC hydro

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mugaha Marsh and Pond Wildlife Viewing Sign

F. B. Corbould
November 1993

PWFWCP Report No. 31

105-01026/

The Peace/Williston Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program is a cooperative venture of BC Hydro and the provincial fish and wildlife management agencies, supported by funding from BC Hydro. The Program was established to enhance and protect fish and wildlife resources affected by the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams on the Peace River, and the subsequent creation of the Williston and Dinosaur Reservoirs.

Peace/Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, 1011 Fourth Ave. 3rd Floor, Prince George B.C. V2L 3H9

Website: *www.bchydro.bc.ca/environment/initiatives/pwcp/*

This report has been approved by the Peace/Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program Fish Technical Committee.

Citation: F. B. Corbould. November 1993. Mugaha marsh and pond wildlife viewing sign. Peace/Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Report No. 31. 3pp plus appendices.

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PROJECT DATE: January to June, 1993.

PROJECT TYPE: Design, production and installation of wildlife viewing sign.

PROJECT LOCATION: Sign erected at Mugaha marsh and pond, near Mugaha Bay..

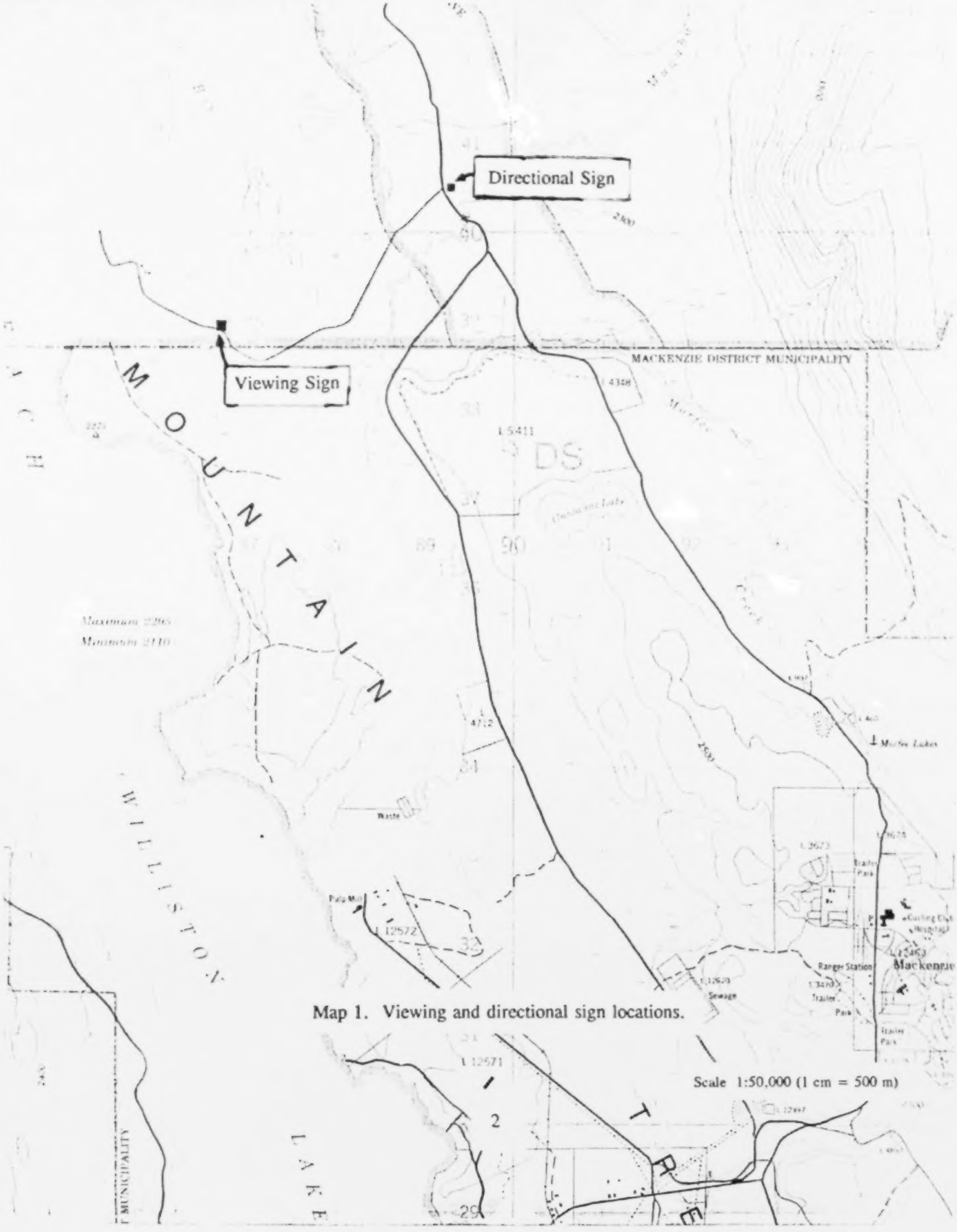
PROJECT DETAILS:

This project was jointly funded by the Wildlife Program (Peace/Williston Compensation) and the Wildlife Watch Program (Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks), and was completed in two phases. Phase 1 (fiscal 1992/93) involved the development and production of the viewing sign, and the production of the sign shelter. The sign text and design was developed by Wildlife Program personnel, reference was made to the *British Columbia Wildlife Watch: Sign and Information Development Guide* (B.C. Environment, 1991) [see Appendix for sign text].

Production of the sign was contracted to Dave Ball Signs (Prince George). The sign was constructed with a 10 gauge aluminum base and a sealed lexan cover. The sign shelter, a modified Type 2 (F2) Information Centre Shelter (Parks Branch), was contracted to Johnson Construction. A directional sign was also purchased during Phase 1.

Phase 2 (fiscal 1993/94) encompassed the installation of the viewing and directional signs, and improvements to the parking area [see Appendix for pictures]. The viewing sign was installed at the north end of Mugaha Bay, approximately 3 km west on "Chico Road" (spur road at 12 km along the Parsnip West Forest Service Road) [Map 1]. The directional sign was erected at the intersection of Chico Road and the Parsnip West FSR.

Parking area improvements included levelling and increasing the size of the parking area. Dirt fill and the transport of the fill was donated by Finlay Forest Industries. The area was levelled by backhoe (Gofer Bill's Excavating). The parking area now provides space for 3 to 4 vehicles.



Map 1. Viewing and directional sign locations.

PROJECT COST:

Phase 1:[a]		
Staff wages		1470.00
Sign production		445.20
Sign shelter		765.00
Directional sign		125.19
	Phase 1 Sub-total	$2,805.39
Phase 2:		
Staff wages		420.00
Backhoe		75.80
Installation equip. & sup. (auger, bolts, etc.)[b]		99.11
	Phase 2 Sub-total	$569.90
	TOTAL	$3,375.29

[a] Contracting of the shelter, and directional and viewing signs was funded by the Wildlife Watch Program (Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks).

[b] Two bags of ready-mix cement was donated by B.C. Environment, Wildlife Branch (Prince George).

PROJECT MONITORING:

1. Check sign in spring 1994 to ensure the sign has maintained its integrity, and was not vandalized.

REFERENCES:

B.C. Environment, 1991. British Columbia Wildlife Watch: sign and information development guide. Draft Version. Victoria. 23pp.

APPENDIX

1. Mugaha Marsh and Pond sign text.

2. Photographs of sign.

MUGAHA MARSH AND POND

WETLANDS

Marshes and ponds represent only two of the wetland types found in the Williston watershed. Others include swamps and bogs. Wetlands are areas that are periodically covered by water, and therefore support a distinctive vegetation community that is in strong contrast to adjacent upland areas. Typical wetland plants found here in the Mugaha area are sedges, pondweeds and smartweeds.

WILDLIFE SPECIES

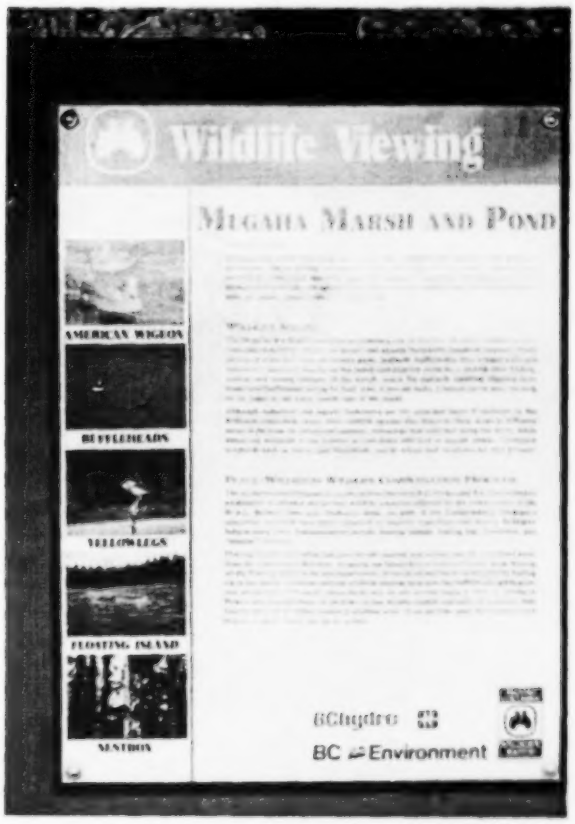
The Mugaha marsh and pond play an essential role in the lives of many wildlife species, especially waterfowl (ducks and geese) and aquatic furbearers (muskrat, beaver). Many species of waterfowl such as Canada geese, mallards, buffleheads, blue-winged teals and American wigeon rely heavily on this marsh and adjacent wetlands to provide their feeding, nesting and resting habitats. In the marsh, watch for mallards dabbling (dipping their heads) and buffleheads diving for food. And, if you are lucky, a beaver can be seen working on its lodge in the pond (north side of the road).

Although waterfowl and aquatic furbearers are the principal users of wetlands in the Williston watershed, many other wildlife species also frequent these areas at different times of the year. In spring and summer, Yellowlegs nest and feed along the shore, while moose use wetlands in the summer to cool down and feed on aquatic plants. Numerous songbirds such as red-winged blackbirds, marsh wrens and swallows are also present.

PEACE/WILLISTON WILDLIFE COMPENSATION PROGRAM

The Compensation Program is a joint venture between BC Hydro and BC Environment established to enhance and protect wildlife resources affected by the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett dam near Hudson's Hope. As part of the Compensation Program's objectives, wetlands have been enhanced to improve waterfowl and aquatic furbearer habitat since 1991. Enhancements include floating islands, loafing logs, nestboxes, and "pothole" creation.

Floating islands and loafing logs provide safe nesting and resting sites for waterfowl away from the unprotected shoreline. In spring, use binoculars to look for Canada geese nesting on the floating island in the northeast corner of the pond and ducks resting on the loafing log in the marsh. Nestboxes provide artificial nesting structures for buffleheads, goldeneyes and mergansers. Ordinarily, these ducks rely on old cavities made in trees by northern flickers and woodpeckers, or on holes in tree trunks created naturally by branches that have broken off. Potholes created in shallow water areas provide space for muskrats and beaver to move below the ice in winter.


Wildlife Viewing
MEGAHA MARSH AND POND
AMERICAN WIGEON
BELTED KINGFISHER
YELLOWLEGS
FLOATING ISLAND
MUSKRAT
BC Environment